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ABSTRACT

This proposal for a longitudinal experimental study with a treatment intervention focuses on the process of writing as revision. Revision refers to the process which occurs prior to and throughout the writing of a work, rather than the final editing. According to this process, the writer goes through five stages: preconceptions concerning style and intention, discrimination as to what the work does or suggests, dissonance or lack of congruence between intention and result, accompanying tension, and, finally, revision. Obstacles may occur at any one of these stages. The treatment interventions focus on removing obstacles to revision and include journal writing, verbalization of experience, and editing the work of other writers. Predictor variables and tests in writing and poetry as process and product are also discussed. (LL)

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WRITING AS REVISION*

Proposal for a longitudinal experimental study with a treatment intervention

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The behavior of concern. We are interested in language as both means and end; for communication effectiveness and play with words. We are concerned with one's striving for excellence in the use of language in writing. We have a special interest in poetry as a way of discoursing that stretches across all kinds of writing including word play, actual dialogue, invented dialogue, true stories, invented stories, directions for how to make or how to do, information, and ideas. We focus on poetry because of what it is and what it can do. (Della-Piana, 1975; Moffett and Wagner, 1976, pp. 436-462.) Poetry is a way of discoursing that says more than can be said in a literal mode and says it with more power and beauty. And the value of poetry beyond the joy of word play is in its contribution to personal development and analytic thinking. For if pushed too soon or exclusively to think and talk in analytic ways the basis of personal development is forced out of children and they will look for it in other ways, perhaps much less felicitous. Furthermore, people can reason and verbalize better if they stop sometimes in favor of intuition and metaphor -- call it the advantage of perspective. Linear, analytic thinking stereotypes thought. A major way to offset this is to combine vocabulary in unusual ways. So much for the behavioral domain we are centering on. Our focus within this behavioral domain is "the revision process" -- writing as revision. Our conceptualization of the revision process is presented in the next section.

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A conceptualization of writing as revision. An analysis of autobiographies, literary criticism, manuscripts of writers, writers writing about their own process, and research, suggests a tentative conceptualization of processes involved in writing-as-revision (See Figure 1, "The process of writing as revision."). Such a formulation can guide the development and validation of assessment procedures and intervention strategies for the study of writing as revision. A writer is seen as one for whom preconceptions (concerning style or what the writer intends for a work to accomplish) guide preliminary work (written, spoken, sensed or thought) and then provides the criterion against which one makes discriminations as to what the work does or what it suggests. Dissonance (lack of congruence between what the work does and what the writer feels it should do) may then follow with associated tension. The tension may be a concern by the writer that the work does do what he intends, but that he is dissatisfied with the intention and wants to change his preconceptions. Or the tension may be a concern that the work does not do what the writer intends and he wants to change the work. The writer may resolve this tension by reconceptions or re-visions. The re-visions may have to do with changing preconceptions concerning style (or other matters), seeing how one might change the work to make it congruent with one's inner vision, or seeing how one may remove obstacles to attempting a resolution. There is no implication that this is all a conscious process. Nor that the elements described flow in a fixed sequence. Nor that one will see dissonance, feel tension, or try to resolve the tension in the direction of matching one's intention with one's perception of what the work does or the other way around. Indeed the inclusion of "obstacles to revision" in the conceptualization implies that preconceptions may limit as well as help, that discrimination as to what a work does may be limited, that dissonance may not be sensed, that tension may not be felt

and reconception may be avoided. This conceptualization suggests measures of performance such as the writer's range of preconceptions (or stylistic biases), the intensity of tension or frequency or duration of "dissonance," the persistence and type and variety of ways in which one attempts to resolve the dissonance, and the ways in which one goes about removing obstacles to revision throughout the work. How does one remove obstacles such as no perception of dissonance, or no tension from dissonance because of audience-approval, or narrow range of stylistic preferences with which to judge one's work, or limited strategies for re-conception? The obstacles themselves suggest that development of the writer must take place over many years and that the understanding of writing as revision is not something one can capture in a one-time brief assessment. And the dimension of discriminating what a work does and how it matches one's sense of what it should do suggests again a developmental pattern beginning with the struggle to master one voice and going on through mastery or non mastery to other models one may imitate, twist or leap from or between.

This conceptualization leads to quite different measures than those currently in vogue, but not-so-different from those recognizable by performing writers. Thus, we see it as unfruitful to conceptualize writing as "original" in the sense of statistical infrequency. For example in one test, "paper" in response to "crackle" is zero points and "biting celery" is four points. In another, the word "bank" is a common associate for "a word that means something different in relation to the words: river _____ money. Rare responses are "liquid," "Seine/Sen," and "currency." But the rarity of one's responses compared with other persons does not negate the possibility that the response was quite common considering the reading and experience of the writer. And it

does not enlighten us concerning the process. Thus we seek measures rich in elucidation of processes of verbal production and covering a wider range of discourse than is customary. We also reject as counterproductive the identification of talent in terms of products alone. We do assume that for a large group of persons distinguished by process there will be many unusual and socially useful products. But our approach to poetry as product is outlined in a separate section below.

Treatment interventions. Our treatment interventions grow out of our conceptualization of the process of writing as revision. Our focus on interventions is on removing obstacles to revision. The specific form they take should grow out of data gathered along the way. Yet we see some possibilities now and are developing them. Some will be applied directly to the writer and others through the formal school, the community, and peers at home or abroad. Writers cannot develop within the formal school alone, but there are advantages of collections of resources and audiences within the formal school setting. Still, the kind of audiences necessary to remove certain obstacles to revision will at times exist outside the formal school.

1. The journal. It is said a journal is not for everyone. The major objection is that most people who start journals give them up. A journal approach where this is less likely to happen is Ira Progoff's At a Journal Workshop, New York: Dialogue House Library, 1975. The structure and ways of using the journal were developed by Progoff out of his experience with life histories of creative people -- creative in writing, art, running a business, rearing children, living a life. The purpose of the journal is to keep in touch with the movement of your life. It is kept for that purpose, but when kept for this general

aim it turns out to be useful for many specific goals -- to improve a relationship, clarify an idea, decide on what to do in your work, or as a source book for writing about things. We have tried Progoff's approach and are developing an abbreviated form of Progoff's journal workshop in which one learns how to get a journal going and how to enter it from a variety of vantage points including logs (daily, periods), dialogues (with persons, works, society, events, the body), movements of process of one's life (stepping stones, roads taken and not taken), and the less analytic depth dimensions of consciousness (dreams, imagery, and inner wisdom). How do writers vary in ways of entering or using this kind of journal? Does the journal take-off remove obstacles to getting a wide range of beginnings for one's work (and thus broaden the narrow preconception)? Does the journal provide that inner movement or significance of what the work intends that maintains the tension needed to get on with the work?

2. The range of discourse. It is probably true that most deficiencies in writing are due to deficiencies in experiencing (putting experience into thought) and verbalizing (making messages from experience for other people). After all, one can experience without verbalizing and one can verbalize without reading and writing. We will emphasize interventions that focus on verbalization of experience (both comprehension and composition) and let writing grow out of that. And to insure experience across the whole range of discourse we will use Moffett's model. See James Moffett and Betty Jane Wagner student-centered language arts and reading, K-13. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1976, especially page 24, although the book is organized around the

model. Does practice along the range of discourse indicated here have effects throughout the revision process? Does it, for example, effect discrimination of a broader range of criteria for what a work might do? Does it increase dissonance in the sense of ability to see what a work does not do from a particular vantage point? Does it produce tension associated with having seen much work done well and thus internalize standards that produce discomfort with mediocrity? Does it increase the possibilities for reconception or resolution of dissonance by providing a broad range of experience in editing and initiating works across a range of kinds of discourse?

A brief summary of Moffett's nine types of discourse is presented here. Poetry, as noted above, is a way of discoursing that stretches across all nine categories.

Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing and the use of other media (graphic, body expression, movies) occur across the whole range of kinds of discourse listed below

1. word play (riddles, puns, tongue twisters)
2. labels and captions (graphs, maps, newspaper headlines)
3. invented dialogue (improvisation, scripts, comic strips)
4. actual dialogue (discussions, interviews, trials, hearings, transcripts)
5. invented stories (fiction, fables, folk tales, myths, legends, narrative poetry, fantasy, realistic fiction)
6. true stories (autobiography, memoir, biographic, reportage, journals
7. directions (how to do things and how to make things)
8. information-generalized fact or information articles that set forth fact obtained from observations of the environment, experiments, what other people know, what records store, books, etc.)
9. ideas (generalized thought including opinion, reflection, generalization and argumentation in the form of essays, dialogue of ideas, loaded description, or maxims.

3. Polarities. While "the journal" and "practice along the range of discourse" may in itself make all the difference in removing obstacles to revision, we think not. There must be something that produces in a writer the endless striving to make manifest that voice within, and that perfection that produces statements such as, at the beginning of the writing of a poem one knows "that the first fifty ways I try it are all going to be wrong." To see one's work as "always experimental and always completely unsatisfactory" or "never finished" or with "an outside eye" that blocks out the conceptual buzz that started the work out loud in one's head, there must be something else. We are guessing. Does it have to do with some-one else at first and perhaps later oneself providing polarities to all one does until there is a sense as to whether the work will also make the reader "experience the buzz" in his own being with nothing but the written matter to do it? Thus, we will attempt interventions to provide polarities to what the writer does. Polarities to preconceptions concerning style or intended effect of the work and how one begins a work. Polarities to the writer's judgment as to whether a work does what was intended or what the work itself suggests. Polarities to the model or voice already mastered. Polarities to the writer's ways of removing obstacles to resolution of dissonance-tension; i.e., polarities to the writers' ways of getting the re-vision that makes the work do what is intended. This appears to be a matter of making use of different significant-to-the-writer audiences. The techniques for providing these polarities are yet to be worked out but will likely include having the writer edit the work of other writers,

compare one's work with others, choose audiences for testing the effect of a work, choose "critics" locally and abroad, and so on.

Predictor variables. We believe that most predictor variables in studies of "creative performance" in writing and other skills suffer from a number of defects. There is generally no evidence that the predictors are causal with respect to a significant criterion, the degree of relationship between predictor and criterion is not strong enough to be useful for individual guidance, sub-processes are not assessed and thus the process by which correct test performance is achieved is not known, and assessment is usually for short-term one time performance in a limited context with respect to behavior where a long span of development is necessary to characterize it adequately. Nevertheless, because the performance we will assess is developmental and process oriented over a wide range of kinds of discourse, we wish to determine the amount variance in our performance measures accounted for by extant "predictor" tests. For this purpose we will use a selection of tests from Eckstrom, Ruth B. and others, Manual for Kit of Factor-Referenced Cognitive Tests, Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1976. Many of the marker tests for these factors have been recently revised (earlier editions were published in 1954 and 1963), the tests are brief, and they are useful for grade nine or beyond (and below if read to the person). These are tests for experimental purposes only. Other tests we will use are from Meeker's Structure of Intellect Learning Abilities Battery; the Torrance, Khatena and Cunnington Thinking Creatively with Sounds and Words, and the Institute for BehavioralResearch in Creativity Biographical Inventory, Form T. There is no space for detailed descriptions here. A brief listing follows.

The first ten measures are from Eckstrom, French and Harman (1976). The remaining ones are indicated below.

1. verbal closure, including unscrambling words (ievg) and finding four letter words hidden among other letters.
2. associational fluency including writing words with same or opposite meaning to a given word and completion of figures of speech.
3. expressional fluency including making sentences to fit blanks with same given first letters of words and others free, making sentences with four given words arranged as desired and others added, and rewriting sentences without changing the meaning.
4. ideational fluency including listing ideas for a given topic, writing about a theme, listing things that are alike in the way indicated.
5. word fluency including writing words with endings, beginnings, or beginnings and endings like given words.
6. associative memory writing first names associated with a given last name after studying a list of first and last names.
7. general reasoning or indicating which arithmetical operations could be used to solve a math problem.
8. logical reasoning or choosing a diagram that correctly characterizes a given relationship such as animals, cats and dogs.
9. verbal comprehension or selecting words that have the same or nearly the same meaning as a given word.
10. flexibility of use or writing different uses for given objects.
11. thinking creatively with sounds and words (Torrance, Khatena and Cunnington ,1973) including writing down word pictures for sound stimuli and for onomatopeic words (scored for verbal originality).

12. divergent production of semantic units (Meeker and others, 1975) or writing a story about a drawing made in a previous test in which the student makes a drawing of given squares by adding lines to it (scored for fluency and originality).

13. biographical inventory (Institute for Behavioral Research in Creativity). This is a multiple choicd heterogeneous questionnaire (grades 5-12) used to predict creative performance.

Toward a criterion: Poetry as process and product. Revision process is the ongoing movement of a writer in getting a work to do what one intends it to do or what the work itself suggests. One would expect that if our conceptualization and measures of this process truly reflect qualitative variations in the work of writers, then there should be a high relationship between process measures and qualitative judgments of works produced. We expect the criteria for these qualitative judgments of work produced to evolve within the unfolding of the study. But we begin with some biases that inform and direct our work. Performance tests of the process of writing as revision will be directed toward the elements outlined in the section above on "a conceptualization of writing as revision." But what of measures of poetry as product? We shall be guided by our sense of what poetry is and what it does as sketched in the opening section of the paper. The poem is for an audience including the poet and others. It is the joy of word play. It is a way of discoursing that has the power of ambiguity -- that says more than can be said in a purely literal mode if there be one. It provides new, intimate, vital perspectives on one's own inner and outer life as a human being and on one's more linear analytic stereotyped modes of thought. How then can one assess the quality of poetry as product? At present we can only provide a hint as to procedure. We aim

for statements about poems along the lines "this poem has such and so many effects on persons with preferences for and acquaintance with poetic discourse of styles e and z, and content q, r, and y." Procedurally then one must first identify content and stylistic acquaintance and preferences of audiences. The audiences might then sort poems-to-be-rated along a continuum of preference and indicate for the high and low ones what appeared to be discriminative for the rating. One must use several kinds of audience, of course, and the ratings may tell us as much about the limitations of audiences as it does about the effect of poems and the extent to which rankings of poem may be accounted for by given characteristics of the audience. Obviously this kind of data may also provide a key to explore the kinds of audience that can best provide the feedback needed for a writer to remove given obstacles to revision.

Proposed designs. We feel that the methodology for a formal study to explore the processes outlined above must combine within a longitudinal cross sectional experimental strategy, some features and/or designs of other experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental form.

The basic design will be a Solomon Four Group Design (Campbell and Stanley, 1963) as follows where G_n = randomly assigned groups at the beginning of the study at ages 14 (Sample A) and 25 (Sample B), P = predictor tests as described above, O = performance tests on the process of writing-as-revision, x = treatment interventions as described above and "-" signifies no test, treatment, or other observation.

G_1	P	O	O	O	O	O	P
G_2	P	XO	XO	XO	XO	XO	P
G_3	-	-	-	-	-	O	P
G_4	-	XO	XO	XO	XO	XO	P
Age Sample A	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Age Sample B	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Prior to beginning the implementation of this design the development of performance tests "O" and tryout on another sample will be carried out for refinement of the measures and suggestions concerning treatment interventions. Also, all along the way, Age Sample B data may suggest intervention strategies for Age Sample A.

How may we implement other research designs and strategies within this basic design. One subdesign will be the multiple baseline design (Baer, Wolf and Risley, 1968) which may be viewed as a single case quasi-experimental design. Suppose some treatment intervention hunch is derived from previous data of the type "writers who have lost tension-for-revision may get it back by communication with writers who have moved from one style to another." This communication would be set up one by one with the lost-tension group and effects observed while treatment is held back until later for others.

The case study evaluation or ecological or systems approach will also be employed (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). This approach views the person as a sub-system in a larger system including peers, home, school, community, and so on. While it is non-experimental, there is probably no other way to study the broad array of possible influences operating upon a writer.

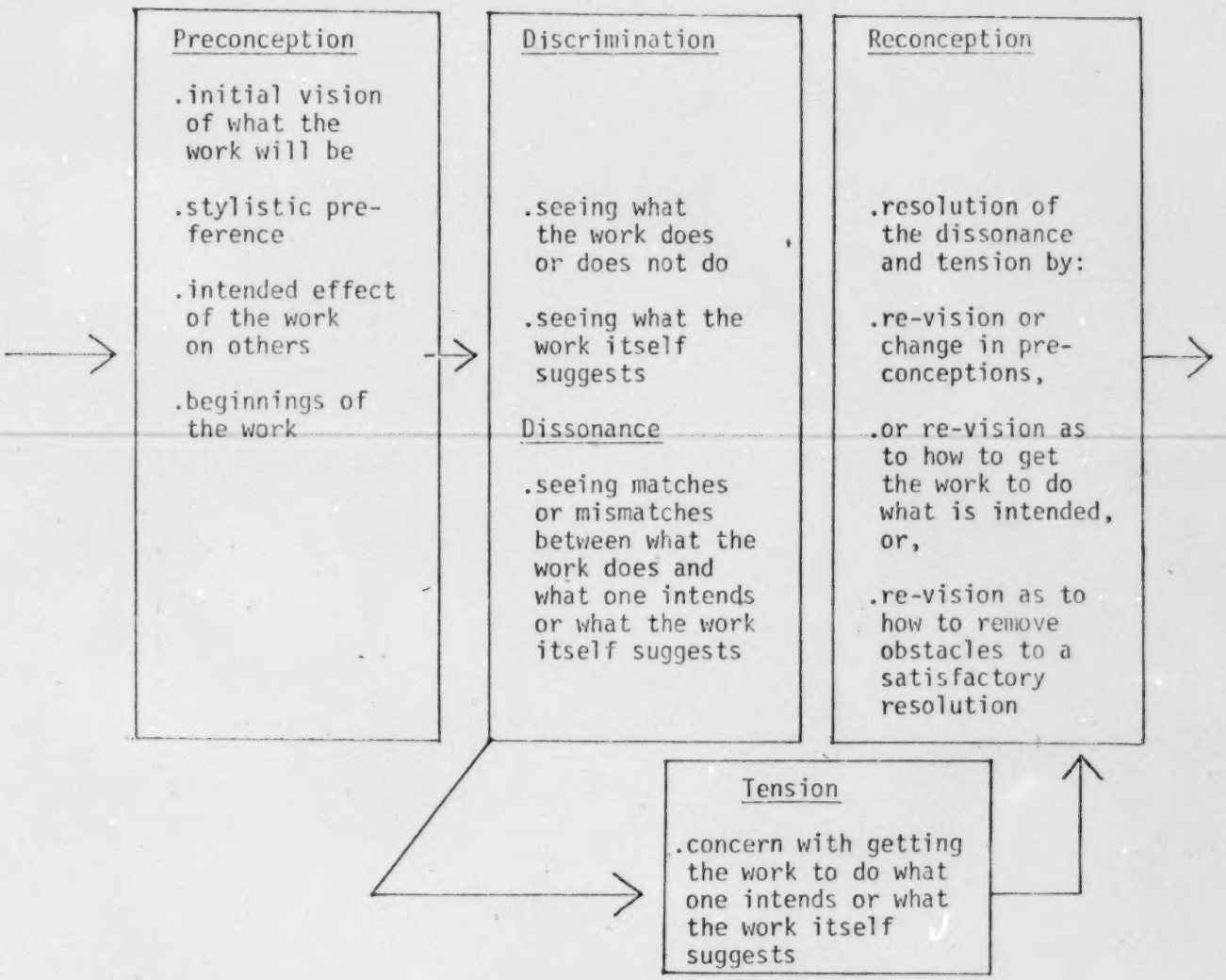
There are disadvantages to the complex design proposed. Longitudinal designs must be carefully shepherded to prevent loss of subjects and the consequent threat to validity. Repeated testing may produce undesirable effects which must be assessed. (The 4-group design and the ecological approach should pick this up.) And there is the question as to whether the same behavior is being measured in repeated measures. Since we see revision process as developmental but details changing, presumably different behaviors will be tapped within the same dimensions or domain.

The design proposed can give us data on predictive validities of current creativity tests, intervention effects, developmental patterns, characterization of revision processes within the model and perhaps some movement toward criterion measures for poetry as product.

And now? Though the proposed longitudinal study is massive and as yet not funded, there is much within the design that provides a guide to beginning work for ourselves and others. We are in process of obtaining a pilot sample through a state writing contest. Thus, work on the criterion problem (poetry as product) and determination of validities of current creativity tests (concurrent if not predictive) can get underway. Also, the development of performance measures of writing-as-revision can be begun. We welcome others to join us. We do not know what we will learn. We only know that we will learn. The process goes on. An article by Ran Blake in the Dec., 1976 issue of the Music Educator's Journal presents an exposition of teaching "third stream music" which we intend to explore in relation to intervention techniques for removal of obstacles to revision.

Figure 1

The Process of Writing as Revision*


Preconception
.initial vision of what the work will be
.stylistic preference
.intended effect of the work on others
.beginnings of the work
Discrimination
.seeing what the work does or does not do
.seeing what the work itself suggests
Dissonance
.seeing matches or mismatches between what the work does and what one intends or what the work itself suggests
Reconception
.resolution of the dissonance and tension by:
.re-vision or change in preconceptions,
.or re-vision as to how to get the work to do what is intended, or,
.re-vision as to how to remove obstacles to a satisfactory resolution
Tension
.concern with getting the work to do what one intends or what the work itself suggests

*"Revision" as we use the term refers not to final editing, but to making a work congruent with what one intends. The process occurs prior to and throughout the writing of a work, until it is finished or abandoned. The "work" may be a poem, experiment, story, painting, business, musical performance or composition, or the rearing of a child. However, our focus is on writing skills in general, and poetry in particular. "Obstacles" to revision may occur through the entire process. They are not shown in the figure but are discussed in the text.

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